

R 201319Z FEB 94  
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3979  
INFO ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 000989

E.O.12356: DECL: OADR

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SUBJECT: BIN LADIN FAMILY PUBLICLY WASHES HANDS OF USAMA

11. CONFIDENTIAL -- ENTIRE TEXT

12. IN A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE IN THE FEBRUARY 19 ARABIC LANGUAGE DAILY, AL-RIYADH, BAKR BIN LADIN, HEAD OF A LARGE AND WEALTHY JEDDAH-BASED BUSINESS FAMILY, PUBLICLY SOUGHT TO DISTANCE HIMSELF AND HIS CLAN FROM THE FAMILY BLACK SHEEP AND INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC ACTIVIST, HIS BROTHER USAMA BIN LADIN. IN THE ARTICLE, BIN LADIN ANNOUNCED THAT THE FAMILY HAD NO CONTROL OVER AND NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACTIONS OF USAMA. A SIMILAR ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE FEBRUARY 20 ISSUE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY, SAUDI GAZETTE. EMBASSY PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATION OF BAKR'S STATEMENT.

13. BEGIN TRANSLATION

ENGINEER BAKR BIN LADIN: USAMA BIN LADIN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS STATEMENTS AND HIS BEHAVIOR WHICH WE NEITHER CONTROL NOR CONDONE.

IN LIGHT OF NEWS ITEMS RECENTLY CARRIED IN THE PRESS CONCERNING USAMA MUHAMMAD BIN LADIN AND IN A DESIRE TO CLARIFY THE POSITION OF HIS FAMILY, ENGINEER BAKR MUHAMMAD BIN LADIN KABIR AL BIN LADIN ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT.

"I AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY--WHO NUMBER MORE THAN FIFTY PEOPLE--EXPRESS OUR GREAT REGRET, SORROW, AND DISAPPROVAL OF ALL OF USAMA'S BEHAVIOR, WHICH WE NEITHER CONTROL NOR CONDONE. IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT USAMA HAS BEEN LIVING OUTSIDE THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA NOW FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS AND ALL OF THE EFFORTS WE HAVE MADE TO BRING HIM BACK TO THE CORRECT PATH, WE CONSIDER HIM SINGULARLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS STATEMENTS, ACTIONS, AND BEHAVIOR, IF IN FACT HE DID THEM.

END TRANSLATION

COMMENT

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14. WE ARE AWARE OF NO RECENT STATEMENT OR ACTION BY USAMA THAT MIGHT HAVE TRIGGERED SUCH A REACTION. THUS, IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT THIS DISCLAIMER WAS PROMPTED BY THE PUBLIC ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE BIN LADEN FAMILY AS A RESULT OF PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THE RECENT ATTACK ON USAMA'S RESIDENCE IN KHARTOUM.

15. THE FACT THAT BAKR'S STATEMENT WAS CARRIED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF A MAJOR SAUDI PAPER SUGGESTS THAT IN ADDITION TO THE BIN LADIN FAMILY, THE ROYAL FAMILY ALSO ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PUBLICLY SEPARATING USAMA FROM HIS ROOTS IN THE KINGDOM.

16. FOR JEDDAH AND KHARTOUM: EMBASSY RIYADH WOULD APPRECIATE ADDITIONAL REPORTING THAT MIGHT HIGHLIGHT ANY RECENT STATEMENTS OR ACTIONS BY USAMA--PERHAPS SINCE THE ATTACK ON HIS RESIDENCE IN KHARTOUM--THAT MIGHT HAVE PRECIPITATED THE PUBLIC DISAVOWAL BY BAKR AND THE FAMILY.

17. KHARTOUM - MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

WELCH